

Substitute Specification. A Marked-Up Copy of the Amended Specification is also enclosed.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 to 5, 8, 9, 11 to 13, 17 and 19 to 24 as follows. A Marked-Up Version of Amended Claims is attached hereto.

1. (Twice Amended) A procedure to create a fleece (44) made of fibers (14) with numerous hole structures (36) extending over the entire cross-section of the fleece (44), comprising:

- in a first step, the fibers (14) are randomly placed on a perforated belt (16) to form a fibrous web (18),
- in a second step, the fibrous web (18) is transported to a hole-structure-creating unit (20; 20a),
- in a third step, the hole-structure-creating unit (20; 20a) is a calendar having two rollers with facing surfaces (24, 28; 28a) between which the fibrous web (18) is guided, and the surface (24) of a first roller has numerous barbs (30) facing the fibrous web (18) and the surface (28; 28a) of a second roller (26; 40a) has openings (32, 32a) in which the barbs (3) of the first surface (24) can at least partially enter, such that the fibers

(14) of the fibrous web (18) below the barbs (30) are displaced without being destroyed when the barbs (30) sink into the openings (32; 32a) and the hole structures (36) are formed without a heat treatment or simultaneous compression, and

Amended
the hole structures (36) are created by mechanically displacing the fibers (14), and the displacement of the fibers (14) does not influence their mechanical and chemical structure, and

-in a fourth step, directly after creating the hole structure, the fibrous web (18) with the hole structures (36) is bonded in a calendar roller arrangement (38; 38a) to form a fleece (44).

2. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous web (18) is additionally transformed by stiffening and thermobonding to form a fleece (44).

3. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 2, wherein before the third step, the fibrous web (18) is prebonded so that the tensile strength of the prebonded fibrous web (18) is 0.1 to 75% of the tensile strength of the bonded fleece (4).

4. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the fibers (14) surrounding the hole structures (36) are additionally fixed before feeding the fibrous web (18) to the bonding unit (38; 38a).

5. (Three Times Amended) A procedure to create a fleece (44) made of fibers (14) with numerous hole structures (36) extending over the entire cross-section of the fleece (44), comprising:

- in a first step, the fibers (14) are randomly placed on a perforated belt (16) to form a fibrous web (18),
- in a second step, the fibrous web (18) is transported to a hole-structure-creating unit (20; 20a),
- in a third step, the hole-structure-creating unit (20; 20a) is a calendar having two rollers with facing surfaces (24, 28; 28a) between which the fibrous web (18) is guided, and the surface (24) of a first roller has numerous barbs (30) facing the fibrous web (18) and the surface (28; 28a) of a second roller (26; 40a) has openings (32, 32a) in which the barbs (3) of the first surface (24) can at least partially enter, such that the fibers (14) of the fibrous web (18) below the barbs (30) are displaced without being destroyed when the barbs (30) sink into the openings (32; 32a) and the hole structures (36) are formed without a heat treatment or simultaneous compression, and

the hole structures (36) are created by mechanically displacing the fibers (14) and the displacement of the fibers (14) does not influence their mechanical and chemical structure, and

- in a fourth step, directly after creating the hole structure, the fibrous web (18) with the hole structures (36) is bonded in a calendar roller arrangement (38; 38a) to form a fleece (44); and

wherein the fibrous web (18) is fed directly to the bonding unit (38; 38a) after the hole structure (36) is created.

8. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the openings (32; 32a) of the second surface (28; 28a) communicate with a vacuum source so that fibers (14) of the fibrous web (18) in the area of the openings (32; 32a) are sucked into the openings (32; 32a).

9. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the openings (32; 32a) of the second surface (28; 28a) communicate with a pressure source so that fibers (14) of the fibrous web (18) in the area of the openings (32; 32a) are blown out of the openings (32; 32a).

11. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 1,
wherein the roller has a diameter of 100 - 500 mm.

12. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim
1, wherein the first element is a lowering and raising plate.

13. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim
1, wherein the barbs (30) of the first element are conical.

17. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim 1,
wherein a second element is a perforated belt.

19. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim 1,
wherein the hole structures (36) have a diameter of 0.5-5 mm.

20. (Twice Amended) A procedure according to claim 19,
wherein the bonding surface is 3-40% of the fleece surface.

21. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim 19,
wherein the number of bonding points (48) is 20 - 120 per square
centimeter.

22. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim 19,
wherein the shape of the hole structures (36) is noncircular.

Amended

23. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim 19, wherein the distance between individual hole structures (36) is irregular.

24. (Three Times Amended) A procedure according to claim 1, wherein the fibrous web (18) is bonded to at least one other sheet medium before creating the hole structures (36).

Please add new claim 25.

OK

25. A procedure according to claim 3, wherein before the third step, the fibrous web (18) is prebonded so that the tensile strength of the prebonded fibrous web (18) is 0.1 to 50% of the tensile strength of the bonded fleece (4).

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The amendments to this patent application are as follows.

The original Specification has been replaced by a Substitute